

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 2 and 8-12 are pending.

***Examiner Interview***

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the interview conducted on June 25, 2009 with Applicant's representative and, in particular, for indicating that Applicant's arguments regarding the structure disclosed by JP '129 would overcome the standing rejections.

A Statement of Substance of Interview is being filed concurrently herewith.

***Response to the Examiner's Prior Art Rejections***

Referring to page 2 of the Office Action, Claims 1, 2 and 8-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application No. 11-324129 ("JP '129"). Referring to page 4 of the Office Action, Claim 12 was separately rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over JP '129.

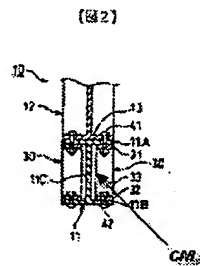
Applicant respectfully traverses.

JP '129 fails to disclose or suggest the presently claimed invention for *at least* the following reasons.

The present claims recite in relevant part reinforcing members (for both a beam-side joint and a column-side joint) comprising two first end plates disposed in an upper end side and two second end plates disposed in a lower end side, the first and second end plates being connected by a groove-type plate. The present claims also require, as additional structure, two stiffener plates disposed at left and right opposite outer sides of the first and second end plates.

The Examiner refers to plate **31** of JP '129 as allegedly being the recited two first end plates and, similarly, to plate **32** of JP '129 as allegedly being the recited two second end plates. However, plates 31 and 32 are each only one single plate.

In addition, the Examiner takes the position that the arrow **CM** in the annotated drawing below, which is reproduced from page 4 of the Office Action, is pointing to a groove-plate member that connects the first and second end plates.



However, the arrow **CM** is not pointing to a structural element of JP '129. Instead, it is pointing to the empty space or gap between the reinforcing member **30** and the surface **11C** of section steel **11**.

In view of the above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the prior art rejections of Claims 1, 2 and 8-12 based on JP '129 are respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1, 2 and 8-12 of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the local, Washington, D.C., telephone number listed below.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111  
Application No.: 10/516,462

Attorney Docket No.: Q84781

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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WASHINGTON OFFICE

**23373**

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: July 27, 2009

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